

## Message Text

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ACTION AF-10

INFO OCT-01 EUR-12 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-05 H-01

INR-07 L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02

SS-15 USIA-06 COME-00 EB-07 LAB-04 SIL-01 TRSE-00

OMB-01 AGRE-00 CU-02 INT-05 IO-13 AID-05 OPIC-03

XMB-02 /112 W

-----049974 231028Z /10

R 221547Z JUL 77

FM AMEMBASSY ABIDJAN

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 4557

INFO AMEMBASSY ACCRA

AMEMBASSY BAMAKO

AMEMBASSY COTONOU

AMEMBASSY DAKAR

AMEMBASSY LOME

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY NIAMEY

AMEMBASSY OUAGADOUGOU

AMEMBASSY PARIS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PGOV, EGEN, IV

SUBJECT: IVORIAN GOVERNMENT REFORM

REF: ABIDJAN 7203

1. NEVER ONE TO LET THE INITIATIVE SLIP FROM HIS GRASP, HOUPHOUET YESTERDAY SOUGHT AND OBTAINED APPROVAL OF HIS COUNCIL OF MINISTERS FOR A SERIES OF ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES DESIGNED TO COMPLEMENT HIS MINISTERIAL RESHUFFLE IN DEMONSTRATING HIS GOVERNMENT'S COMMITMENT TO RESTORE ORDER AND HONESTY IN ITS OWN HOUSE. TO FURTHER DRAMATIZE THE SERIOUSNESS OF HIS EFFORTS, HOUPHOUET ALSO ANNOUNCED THAT HE IS GRANTING HIS OWN EXTENSIVE LANDHOLDINGS AROUND YAMOUS-  
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SOUKRO (HIS BIRTHPLACE) TO THE STATE.

2. THE ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES INCLUDE ESTABLISHMENT OF FIVE NATIONAL COMMISSIONS TO COMBAT ABUSES OF GOVERNMENTAL POWER AND PRIVILEGE, PLUS A GENERALIZED EFFORT TO FIGHT ABSENTEEISM AMONG PUBLIC SERVANTS. THE FIVE COMMISSIONS ARE:

-- GOVERNMENT CONTRACTS: FUNCTION IS TO EXAMINE BIDS ON MAJOR GOVERNMENTAL CONTRACTS TO ASSURE THAT NATIONAL INTEREST IS SERVED. ONE STIMULUS FOR CREATION OF THIS COMMISSION WAS PROBABLY SERIES OF ACCUSATIONS AND RECRIMINATIONS SURROUNDING LAST WINTER'S AWARDED OF TELEPHONE SWITCHING EQUIPMENT CONTRACT TO FRENCH FIRM DESPITE LOWER BID BY U.S. FIRM, NORTH ELECTRIC. THREAT OF LOSS OF FOREIGN INVESTOR CONFIDENCE IS SERIOUS CONSIDERATION HERE.

-- GOVERNMENT -SUBSIDIZED HOUSING: FUNCTION IS TO PREVENT CORRUPTION IN ALLOCATION OF SUCH HOUSING.

-- GOVERNMENT VEHICLES: USE OF GOVERNMENT VEHICLES FOR PRIVATE PURPOSES IS RAMPANT. PERHAPS COMMISSION WILL SUCCEED WHERE OTHER EFFORTS AT CONTROL HAVE FAILED.

-- GOVERNMENTAL LEASES: FUNCTION IS TO IMPROVE ACCOUNTABILITY SO THAT PAYMENTS ARE MADE ONLY FOR AUTHORIZED LEASES.

-- VILLAGE PLANTATIONS: FUNCTION IS TO REVIEW DISTRIBUTION OF COCONUT PLANTATIONS BY SODEPALM (PARASTATAL ENTERPRISE CHARGED WITH DEVELOPING PALM OIL AND COCONUT PRODUCTION) TO ASSURE THAT SUCH DISTRIBUTION BENEFITS VILLAGE COMMUNITIES RATHER THAN PRIVATE INDIVIDUALS.

3. UNLIKE THE ADMINISTRATIVE MEASURES WHICH HAD ALL BEEN DISCUSSED PUBLICLY BEFORE, HOUPHOUET'S TURNING OVER OF HIS PRIZED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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YAMO USSOUKRO PROPERTIES -- THE SHOWPIECE OF IVORIAN AGRICULTURAL PROGRESS, ESPECIALLY FOR HOUPHOUET'S INTERNATIONAL VISITORS -- TO THE STATE CAME AS A REAL SURPRISE TO THE ENTIRE COUNTRY. ALTHOUGH THERE HAVE BEEN SOME RUMORS THAT THESE PROPERTIES HAVE BEEN OPERATING IN THE RED RECENTLY, THEIR MARKET VALUE IS UNQUESTIONABLY IMMENSE. HOUPHOUET'S ADDITION OF THIS PERSONAL CONTRIBUTION TO HIS EXHORTATIONS TO HIS SUBORDINATES ON SELFLESSNESS AND COMMITMENT TO NATIONAL INTERESTS ADDS SIGNIFICANTLY TO THE DRAMATIC IMPACT OF HIS REFORM PACKAGE.

4. INITIAL SOUNDINGS INDICATE THAT HOUPHOUET HAS INDEED SUCCEEDED IN CREATING A SENSE OF THE URGENCY OF REFORM IN HIS GOVERNMENT. NEVERTHELESS, THE PROBLEMS TO WHICH HE IS ADDRESSING HIMSELF ARE DEEP-SEATED AND WILL NOT BE ROOTED OUT OVERNIGHT. THE REAL TEST WILL BE WHETHER HE CAN SUSTAIN OVER THE LONG-TERM THE MOMENTUM WHICH HE IS NOW SO COMPREHENSIVELY WORKING TO CREATE.

COOKE

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NNN

## Message Attributes

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**Channel Indicators:** n/a  
**Current Classification:** UNCLASSIFIED  
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**Disposition Date:** 22 May 2009  
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**Executive Order:** N/A  
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**Type:** TE  
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**Review Markings:**  
Margaret P. Grafeld  
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